



**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
**Washington, DC 20423**

*Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration*

May 5, 2004

Miss Patricia Hooks  
 Regional Director  
 U.S. Department of the Interior  
 National Park Service  
 Southeast Region  
 100 Alabama Street, SW  
 1924 Building  
 Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34421, HolRail LLC— Construction and Operation  
 Orangeburg and Dorchester Counties, South Carolina  
 Request for Comments on Potential Environmental Impacts

Dear Miss Hooks:

On November 13, 2003, HolRail LLC (HolRail) filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502 for authority to construct and operate a new rail line in Orangeburg and Dorchester Counties, South Carolina (SC) (see Figure 1). The project would involve the construction of an approximately 2-mile rail line to connect a cement production factory near Holly Hill, SC, owned by HolRail's parent company, Holcim (US) Inc. (Holcim), with an existing rail line of the Norfolk Southern Railway Company, located near Giant, SC.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (NEPA) and the Board's environmental rules, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will prepare an environmental document that evaluates the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project and the reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposal, including the no-build alternative, as discussed below. The purpose of this letter is to request information from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project, as well as any permits and approvals that may be required.

The proposed project would establish competitive rail service at the facility located at Holly Hill, SC, which presently is served only by CSX Transportation, Inc. (CSX). Holcim

recently completed an expansion of the Holly Hill plant and has determined that rail competition is necessary to achieve the full benefits of the expanded production capacity.

HolRail proposes to build a 2-mile rail line, on one of two potential routes between Holly Hill and Giant (see Figure 2). Both routes parallel the existing CSX line across Four Hole swamp between Peedee Lake and Rowser Lake. Route A would involve constructing the line within the existing right-of-way of CSX while alternate Route B would be constructed outside of the CSX right-of-way, approximately 50 yards to the east of the existing CSX line, on property almost completely owned by Holcim. The environmental document will evaluate both Routes A and B, as well as the no-build alternative and any other reasonable alternatives.

HolRail intends to construct and own the track, which would be a common carrier rail line. HolRail would arrange for a third-party operator, possibly the Norfolk Southern Railway Company, to provide rail service. HolRail would employ a contractor to provide maintenance service for the line, or engage the third-party operator to perform this service.

Most shipments on the new rail line would be non-hazardous materials. Inbound traffic would generally be empty covered hopper cars, and most of the outbound traffic would be cement in covered hopper cars.

In 2004, Holcim projects the Holly Hill facility will ship approximately 555,000 metric tons of cement by rail, which totals approximately 6,440 carloads. At optimum production, the facility will load and tender up to 60 rail cars per day in a single block-train. Inbound, Holly Hill will receive approximately 150,000 metric tons of coal per year (1,500 carloads) in 70-car unit trains, and smaller quantities of sand and white cement. A Holcim subsidiary, also located at the plant site, will receive approximately 260 tank cars of waste chemicals annually, which are blended for incineration as fuel. While the Holly Hill facility consumes a portion of the blended product, the remaining amount (roughly 120 carloads annually) is shipped to other facilities.

This letter begins the process by which SEA will assess the potential environmental effects, both positive and negative, that may be associated with the proposed rail line construction and operation. We appreciate your assistance in identifying whether resources of concern to your agency may be affected by the proposed project. We request your response by June 4, 2004, so that we may be able to schedule any meetings, site visits, or surveys, conduct necessary follow-up activities, and incorporate your response into the scope of the study, as appropriate.

Parsons Transportation Group is serving as SEA's independent third-party consultant in this proceeding, and will assist SEA in the preparation of the environmental document. Please send your comments to:

Mr. Winn Frank  
Parsons Transportation Group  
1133 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005

SEA will prepare either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). SEA's decision on whether to prepare an EA or an EIS will be based in part on comments received in response to this agency consultation letter. SEA will make the environmental document available for review by agencies and the public as required by NEPA and the Board's environmental rules (49 CFR 1105). In reaching its decision, the Board will take into account the environmental document and all environmental comments that are received.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Winn Frank, Project Manager for Parsons Transportation Group, at 202-775-3382, or Dave Navecky, SEA Project Manager, at 202-565-1593. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victoria" and last name "Rutson" clearly distinguishable.

Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis

Attachments (2)

## DISTRIBUTION

U.S. Department of the Interior--National Park Service--Southeast Region (Patricia Hooks, Regional Director)

U.S. Department of the Interior--Geological Survey--Water Resources Division (Marjorie S. Davenport, District Chief)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers--Charleston District--Regulatory Division (Tina Hadden, Chief)

U.S. Department of Agriculture--Natural Resources Conservation Service (Walter Douglas, State Conservationist)

U.S. Department of Commerce--National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration--Coastal Services Center (Jeff Payne, Director)

U.S. Department of Commerce--National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration--National Marine Fisheries Service--Southeast Regional Office--Habitat Conservation Division--Charleston Field Office (Prescott Brownell, Fishery Biologist)

U.S. Department of Commerce--National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration--National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office--Habitat Conservation Division (David Dale, NEPA Specialist)

U.S. Department of the Interior--Fish & Wildlife Service--Southeast Region--Charleston Ecological Services Field Office (Timothy Hall, Field Supervisor)

U.S. Department of Transportation--Federal Highway Administration--South Carolina Division (Bob L. Lee, Division Administrator)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency--Region 4 (Heinz Mueller, )

State Clearinghouse for Intergovernmental Review--Grant Services--Office of the Governor (Bonnie Anderson, Grants Coordinator)

Dorchester Soil and Water Conservation District Office (W. Tolman Salisbury, Chairman)

Orangeburg Conservation District Office (Kenneth S. Ott, Chairperson)

South Carolina Department of Agriculture (Charles R. Sharpe, Commissioner)

South Carolina Department of Archives and History--State Historic Preservation Office (Marta Matthews, Review & Compliance Coordinator)

South Carolina Department of Archives and History--State Historic Preservation Office (Chad C. Long, Staff Archaeologist)

South Carolina Department of Commerce--Community and Rural Development (I. Maceo Nance, Director)

South Carolina Department of Commerce--Public Railways (Dan Green, Director)

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control--Office of Environmental Quality Control--Bureau of Air Quality--Regulatory Division (Heather Preston, Chief)

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control--Office of Environmental Quality Control--Bureau of Water--Regulatory Division (Rheta Geddings, Director)

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control--Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management--Regulatory Programs Division (Richard Chinnis, Director)

South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (Robert M. Kerr, Director)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources--Environmental Programs Division (Ed Duncan, Director)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources--Land, Water and Conservation Division (Alfred H. Vang, Deputy Director)

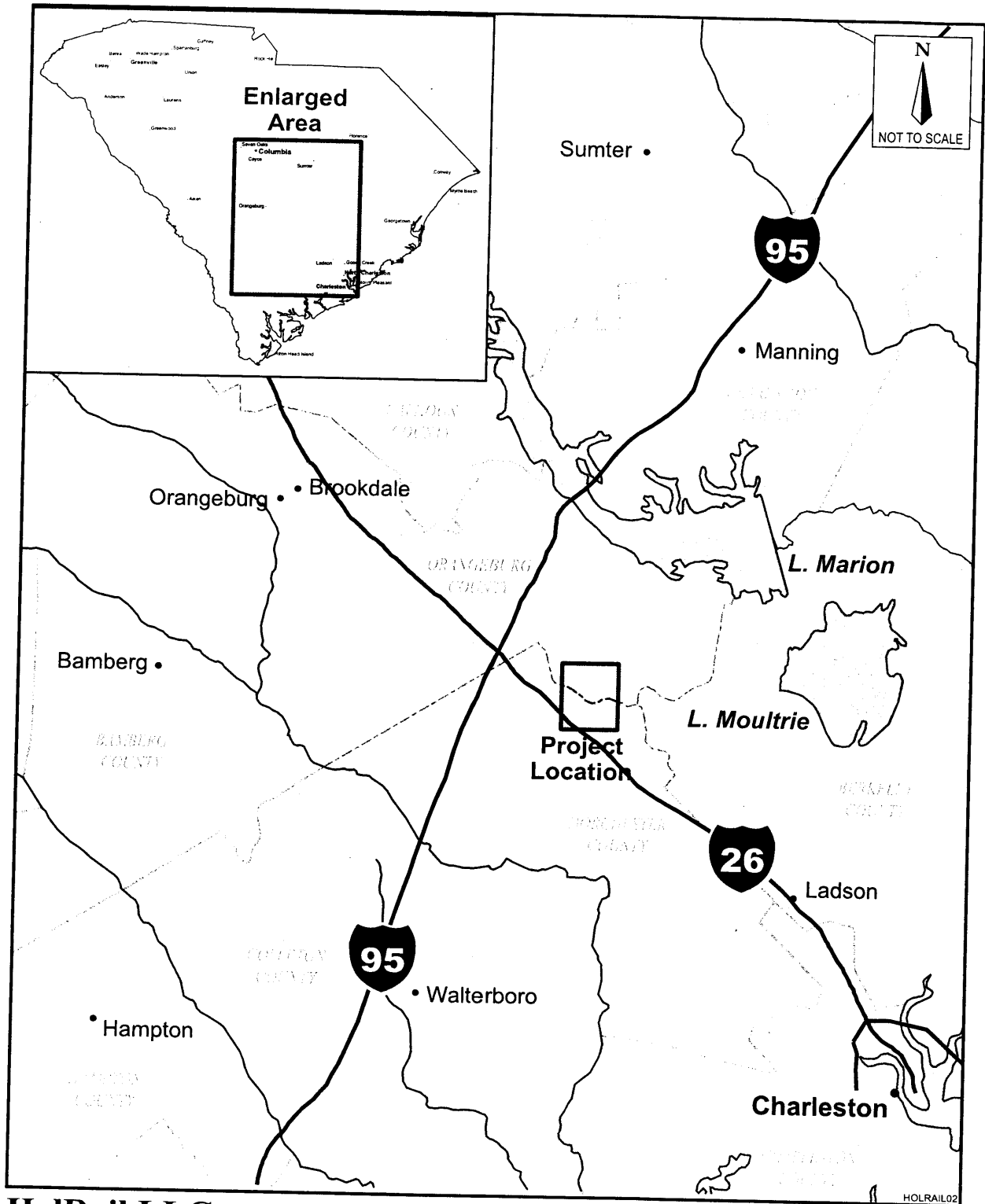
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources--Heritage Trust Program (Tom Kohlsaas, Section Chief)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources--Marine Resources Division (Robert Boyles, Deputy Director)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources--Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division (Billy McTeer, Deputy Director)

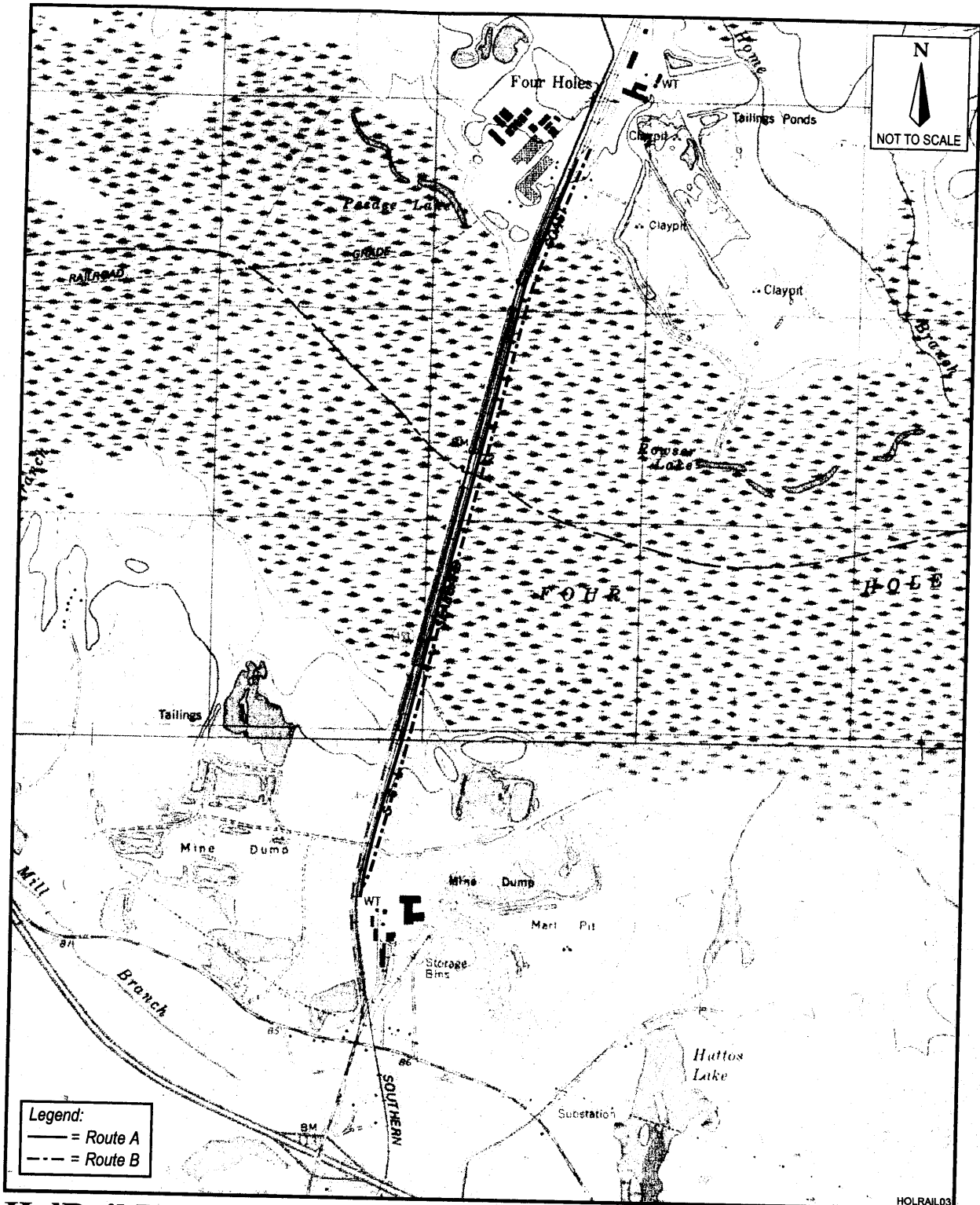
DISTRIBUTION, cont.

South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism--State Park Service (Chad Prosser, Director)  
South Carolina Department of Transportation (Elizabeth Mabry, Executive Director)  
South Carolina Forestry Commission (Bob Schowalter, State Forester)  
South Carolina Geological Survey (C.W. Clendenin, Jr., State Geologist)  
Dorchester County Council (Randy Scott, Chairman)  
Dorchester County Department of Economic Development (Jim Friar, Director)  
Dorchester County Department of Planning and Zoning (Charlie Miller, Director)  
Dorchester County Department of Public Works (Doug Tompkins, Director)  
Dorchester County Office of the County Administrator (Jason Ward, Interim Administrator)  
Dorchester County Transportation Committee (Marshall Murdaugh, Chairman)  
Orangeburg County Council (John H. Rickenbacker, Chairman)  
Orangeburg County Department of Public Works (Earl Whalen, Director)  
Orangeburg County Development Commission (Henry H. Johnson, III, Director)  
Orangeburg County Office of the County Administrator (J. William Clark, County Administrator)  
Orangeburg County Office of Planning (Harold Young, Coordinator)



**HolRail LLC -**  
**Construction and Operation**  
 STB Finance Docket No. 34421

**PROJECT AREA**  
 Figure 1



**HolRail LLC -**  
**Construction and Operation**  
 STB Finance Docket No. 34421

**POTENTIAL ROUTES**  
 Figure 2